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# **ANNUAL REPORT**

**OF THE**

**MEDICAL OFFICER  
OF HEALTH**

**MEDICAL OFFICER  
FOR  
MATERNITY AND CHILD WELFARE**

**AND**

**CHIEF SANITARY INSPECTOR**

**OF THE**

**BOROUGH OF TAUNTON  
FOR THE YEAR 1947**



Public Health Department,  
St. Paul's House,  
TAUNTON.  
27th September, 1948.

The Mayor, Aldermen and Burgesses,  
**THE BOROUGH OF TAUNTON.**

Mr. Mayor, Madam and Gentlemen,

I have to submit an abridged annual report for the year 1947. This is prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Ministry of Health in Circular 170/47. The statistics for the year are generally satisfactory. The live birth rate increased to 21.0 per 1,000 population while the illegitimate birth rate fell to 1.1.

The death rate of 12.8 was slightly higher than in preceeding years. The death rate of infants under one year of age per 1,000 live births was 37.5, a comparatively low figure; but the death rate of infants under one month was 30.0 mainly due to prematurity.

As regards infectious diseases, Measles and Whooping Cough were prevalent.

Gross overcrowding due to lack of housing accommodation persists and it is almost impossible to take any action.

I am indebted to Alderman A. J. West, J.P., Chairman of the Maternity and Child Welfare and Public Health Committee, for his continued interest and support, and the Staff of the Department for loyal co-operation.

I am,  
Your obedient servant,  
JOHN ALLEN,  
*Medical Officer of Health.*

## BOROUGH OF TAUNTON.

### Annual Report of the Medical Officer for the Year 1947.

#### SUMMARY OF STATISTICS.

Registrar General's estimate of the resident population	...	...	31,570
Number of inhabited houses at the end of 1947, according to the			
Rate Books	...	...	8,650
Rateable value at the end of December, 1947	...	...	£247,157
Estimated product of a penny rate	...	...	£960
Births live and still :—			
Male 348. Female 331. Total 679.			21.5
Births live Male 338. Female 327. Total 665.			21.0
Births still Male 10. Female 4. Total 14.			0.4
Births illegitimate live and still :—			
Male 23. Female 13. Total 36.			1.1
Deaths. Male 187. Female 220. Total 407.			12.8
Infant mortality, deaths under 1 year per 1,000 live births :—			
Infant deaths. Male 17. Female 8. Total 25.	...	...	37.5
Infant deaths, legitimate. 24. per 1,000 legitimate births	...	...	38.1
Infant deaths, illegitimate, 1. per 1,000 illegitimate births	...	...	27.7
Infant deaths under one month per 1,000 live births	20.	...	30.0
Deaths from diarrhoea of infants under two years of age, 2.			
rate per 1,000 live births	...	...	3.0

#### GENERAL PROVISION OF HEALTH SERVICES.

##### Maternity and Child Welfare.

##### The Service provided includes :—

**Ante-Natal Clinics**—held twice a week in the Health Centre, Tower Lane, with a woman doctor attending on Monday afternoons, and a midwives' one on Wednesday afternoons. The number of women who attended before their confinement was 327, while six were examined afterwards. Six mothers who had booked a midwife for their confinement were referred to their own doctor at the request of the midwife.

##### Obstetric Consultant.

This service was provided for 26 cases at the request of the doctor attending.

##### Maternity Home, Canon Street.

This has ten beds including one in an isolation room. The number of women admitted was 209, including 9 specially admitted for ante-natal care. Two women who could not be admitted were, with the co-operation of the County Medical Officer of Health, admitted to maternity homes under his control.

##### Home Help Scheme.

The lack of female help continued, but it was possible to provide home help for five cases including one of triplets.

### **Infant Welfare Centre.**

There are two, where mothers can bring their children under five years of age for examination and advice. One at the Health Centre, Tower Lane, is open on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons. The other at Halcon Chapel, is open on Wednesday afternoons. Both are very well attended, and there is now need for another to serve the Rowbarton area. Total consultations given numbered 6,804, including 488 new infants brought for the first time. These represent about 73% of the live births during the year.

### **Health Visitors.**

There are three who also act as Infant Life Protection Visitors (for the supervision of foster children), and as school nurses. About half their time is spent on Maternity and Child Welfare work.

### **Complicated Maternity Cases.**

In accordance with the agreement between the Council and the Taunton & Somerset Hospital, 75 cases with complications of pregnancy were admitted from the borough during the year. There was one death among these.

### **Puerperal Pyrexia.**

This condition includes all cases where the temperature is raised over a certain amount within three weeks of child birth, and therefore includes many conditions which are not due to puerperal infection. The number of cases notified was 28, and nine of these were removed to the special unit for this purpose at the Isolation Hospital. There were no deaths from this cause. The number notified is equal to a rate of 41.2 per thousand live and still births as compared with a rate of 6.2 for corresponding towns.

### **Day Nursery.**

This is a pre-fabricated building in Victoria Park, East Reach. It has 45 places—including 14 for age 0-2 years and 35 for ages 2-5 years. A charge of 2/- per day is made. It is open from 8.30 a.m. to 5.30 p.m. on week days. The average attendance has been good, and the demand for places is unsatisfied. All the mothers are in full time employment, and there is a waiting list sufficient to fill at least another nursery of the same capacity.

### **The Care of Illegitimate Children.**

Illegitimate births in 1947 were 36 live and no still births: equal to an illegitimate birth rate of 1.1 per 1,000 population. One of these died. With the co-operation of the County Medical Officer of Health, Somerset, two unmarried mothers were admitted to a

special hostel at Dulverton, and four illegitimate infants were being maintained in residential nurseries at the end of the year. A grant of £100 is made to the Taunton and District Society for the Welfare of Women and Girls, who maintain a social worker. Reports by her on cases dealt with in this area are submitted to me at the end of each quarter.

**The Care of Premature Infants.**

The special arrangements which it has so far been possible to make for the care of these are :—

- (1) On the birth notification form if 5½ lbs. in weight or under.
- (2) Retention for a suitable period in Maternity Home or Hospital where necessary.
- (3) Notification to this department just before discharge, so that the Health Visitor can give special supervision.

Of the 665 live births 28 were premature and twelve died from this cause. Eleven of these were less than 24 hours old and one between 24 hours and one week. Nine were born in institutions, and three at home.

**The Promotion of Cleanliness and Elimination of Verminous Conditions.**

The three Health Visitors who are also the School Nurses, pay frequent visits to the Schools, and examine all children present for cleanliness. If any child is found to be unclean a home visit is made and the mother advised, while any younger children are examined. I consider that the general standard of cleanliness is very good. Cases of scabies or itch have again decreased in number. The unit for the treatment of cases at Musgrove Park Hospital was open on Tuesday and Friday afternoons from 2 to 4 p.m. Attendances were :—

			<i>from the</i>	<i>out of</i>
			<i>Borough.</i>	<i>Borough.</i>
Number of cases	...	...	66	38
Number of treatments	...	...	149	100

**Welfare Foods Service.**

The distribution of Cod Liver Oil, Vitamin Tablets, Orange Juice, and National Dried Milk through the Infant Welfare Centre at St. Paul's House and Halcon Chapel continued.

**Supply of Sheets for Expectant Mothers.**

The scheme enabling expectant mothers who are to be confined at home to purchase 2 or 3 sheets at a controlled price and free of purchase tax was modified on 1st March when the issue of priority dockets ceased. These were then replaced by coupon equivalent certificates which carry no priority of supply. In all 377 dockets or certificates were supplied on the midwives certificate to 140 expectant mothers.



## SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE AREA.

### Water Supply.

This is from an upland surface—stored in three reservoirs and subjected to filtration through rapid sand filters and the addition of chlorine before it is supplied to the public.

Samples of water from main taps in different parts of the town are taken once each week, and the raw water and the water immediately after treatment at intervals of a fortnight, and sent to the Public Health Laboratory of the Ministry of Health at County Hall, Taunton. In all 57 main tap samples were taken—of these 54 showed no probable coliform bacilli per 100 ml., while two showed 5 probable coliform bacilli per 100 ml., and one three probable coliform bacilli per 100 ml. A chemical sample of main tap water in the town taken on 23rd September, showed a slightly acid reaction ( $\text{pH}=6.8$ ) and a modification of the treatment was advised.

A further sample taken on 20th October, gave a slightly alkaline reaction ( $\text{pH}=8.2$ ).

The County Analyst gave the following report on this sample :—

							<i>Results in parts per 100,000</i>
Physical Characters clear							
Reaction slightly alkaline $\text{pH}=8.2$ .							
Total Solids	...	...	...	...	...	...	12.0
Alkalinity (as $\text{CaCO}_3$ )	...	...	...	...	...	...	7.0
Total Hardness	...	...	...	...	...	...	6.5
(a) Permanent	...	...	...	...	...	...	3.0
(b) Temporary	...	...	...	...	...	...	3.5
Chlorine in terms of sodium chloride	...	...	...	...	...	...	2.4
Nitrogen as saline and free ammonia	...	...	...	...	...	...	0.0034
Nitrogen as albuminoid	...	...	...	...	...	...	0.014
Nitrogen as nitrates	...	...	...	...	...	...	nil.
Oxygen absorbed from Permanganate, 4 hours at 80 deg. F.	...	...	...	...	...	...	0.08
Free Carbon dioxide	...	...	...	...	...	...	nil.
Zinc	...	...	...	...	...	...	none.

The Taunton Corporation also provides a separate supply for parts of Taunton R.D., from Leigh Reservoir, where the raw water is passed through slow sand filters and chlorine added. Twelve samples of this were taken—eleven of these showed no probable coliform bacilli in 100 ml., and one showed 8 probable coliform bacilli per 100 ml.

There are about 8,650 inhabited houses and all except 51 are supplied from public mains direct to the houses. Of the 51 without a direct supply, 46 are houses in Confirmed Clearance Orders occupied under requisition or licence. Four are supplied from wells and one from a spring.

## Notifiable Infectious Disease.

A return made to the Registrar General at the end of each quarter includes the number of cases originally notified and the final numbers corrected by information received from the Isolation Hospital or other sources. A summary of these is given here :—

<i>Disease</i>	<i>Originally Notified.</i>	<i>Removed to Isol. Hosp.</i>	<i>Corrected Numbers.</i>	<i>Deaths</i>
Scarlet Fever ...	48	32	44	1
Diphtheria ...	5	5	3	—
Whooping Cough ...	83	6	83	2
Measles ...	486	8	479	2 (R.G.=1)
Erysipelas ...	9	1	9	—
Cerebro-spinal Fever	2	2	2	—
Ac. Poliomyelitis ...	1	1	1	—
Puerperal Pyrexia ...	28	13	28	—
Typhoid Fever ...	2	1	1	—
Para-typhoid Fever ...	1	1	1	—
Pneumonia ...	11	1	11	14
Dysentery ...	1	—	1	—
Ophthalmia Neo natorum	1	—	1	—
Food Poisoning ...	1	—	—	—

(includes  
non-noti-  
fiable  
cases.)

The case of Typhoid Fever contracted the infection in France while the case of Paratyphoid was infected while away from this area.

## Prevention of Diphtheria.

There were three cases of this disease, two were adults and one a child—none had been immunised. Arrangements for the free immunisation of children are :—A session on Saturday mornings from 10 a.m. to 11.30 a.m. and on the first Friday afternoon in each month at the Health Centre, Tower Lane, and a session on the first Wednesday in each month from 11 a.m. to 12 noon at Halcon Chapel. Through the School Medical Service arrangements are made to visit each school and give third or booster injections to those children whose parents have agreed to this being done. A parent can alternatively go to the family doctor and have this free for the younger children, the fee being paid on receipt of a certificate giving the essential particulars.

During the year 460 children under 15 years of age were given a complete course of immunisation while 525 had a third or booster injection. It was estimated that at the end of December about 54% of those under 5 years of age and 80% of those between 5 and 15 years, or 70% of the child population under 15 years of age had been protected against Diphtheria.

## Refuse Collection and Disposal.

Domestic refuse is now collected once a week. It is dumped on ground near the Sewerage Works.



# ANNUAL REPORT

## OF THE

### CHIEF SANITARY INSPECTOR.

For the year 1947.

To The Mayor, Aldermen and Burgesses.

Mr. Mayor, Madam and Gentlemen,

I have pleasure in submitting my annual report for the twelve months ending 31st December, 1947.

#### SUMMARY OF VISITS AND INSPECTIONS.

##### Housing and General Sanitary Work.

Houses inspected under the Public Health and Housing Acts	...	235
Re-inspections	... ..	335
Infectious diseases, in connection with (including 30 visits to small-pox contacts)	... ..	256
Factories	... ..	117
Drainage, in connection with	... ..	188
Rodent control (excluding visits by Rodent Operator)	... ..	146
Public conveniences	... ..	21
Houses let in lodgings	... ..	23
Moveable dwellings	... ..	59
Stables	... ..	9
Offensive trades	... ..	30
Smoke visits and observations	... ..	17
Verminous premises	... ..	19
Common Lodging Houses	... ..	5
Refuse disposal	... ..	22
General inspections	... ..	496
Interviews	... ..	84
Total		2,062

**Housing Repairs.** The position with regard to the reconditioning of houses under Section 9 of the Housing Act, 1936, is deteriorating. The low rents, the high cost and shortage of materials, and the request made by the Ministry of Works that restraint should be exercised by Sanitary Inspectors in pressing for building repairs has made it impossible to operate this Section. The essential works of repair to houses that have been carried out have been done under Section 92 of the Public Health Act, 1936. During the year repairs were executed under this Section at 65 houses.

**Rodent Control.** In March a scheme for the systematic search and treatment of premises within the Borough infested with rats and mice was put into operation with the approval of the Ministry of

Food. This scheme provided for the free treatment of infestations at private dwelling houses, and the recovery of costs of treatment from the occupiers in the case of business premises. Three men were engaged on this work until the end of June, and during that period the following work was carried out :—

Visits on search work	... ..	6,564
Poison treatments carried out at private dwellings	... ..	236
Poison treatments carried out at business premises	... ..	29

One operator was retained after the above scheme was completed at the end of June and the following work was carried out from that time to the end of the year :—

Visits on search work	... ..	607
Poison treatments at private dwellings	... ..	254
Poison treatments at business premises	... ..	25

**Disinfection.** Disinfection after Tuberculosis and other Infectious diseases was carried out at 22 houses and 8 wards at the Musgrove Park Hospital.

**Verminous Houses.** During the year seven houses found to be infested with vermin were treated with D.D.T. preparations with satisfactory results.

**Offensive Trades.** There are six offensive trades established within the Borough, comprising two hide and skin depots, and four rag and bone merchants. These businesses were conducted without nuisance.

**Moveable Dwellings.** There is one moveable dwelling situated within the Borough licensed for occupation, and one licensed site. It has been necessary to make representations to the owner of the licensed site to restrain occupiers of moveable dwellings thereon from creating nuisances on the site.

## FOOD INSPECTION

### Visits in connection with the inspection and supervision of food.

Slaughterhouses	...	...	...	...	732
Food shops	...	...	...	...	271
Food preparing premises	...	...	...	...	39
Wholesale Meat Depot.	...	...	...	...	30
Dairies, Cowsheds and Milkshops	...	...	...	...	111
Bakehouses	...	...	...	...	45
Ice-cream premises	...	...	...	...	130
Restaurants	...	...	...	...	27
Visits re sampling of water, milk and ice-cream					221
Total					1,606

**Dairies and Cowsheds.** There are five Dairy Farms, one wholesale milk factory, two wholesale producers of milk, and eighteen retailers within the Borough. In addition six retailers supply milk in Taunton from premises outside the Borough. Tuberculin Tested milk is supplied by thirteen retailers within and four from outside the Borough. Pasteurised milk is supplied by seven retailers within and one from outside the Borough.

**Pasteurised Milk.** There are three producers of Pasteurised milk within the Borough, and 153 samples were taken from them for the purpose of testing the efficiency of the pasteurisation process and the cleanliness of the milk. Two samples failed in the phosphatase Test which indicates that the pasteurisation was inefficient, and on investigation it was found that the failures were due to defects in the plants. Ten samples failed in the Methylene Blue Test which indicates unsatisfactory cleansing of equipment carrying milk after pasteurisation. Your Inspectors draw the attention of Pasteurising plant operators to adverse sample reports immediately they are received with a view to pasteurised milk being delivered to the public up to the standard set out in the Regulations.

**Bakehouses.** There are nineteen bakehouses in use within the Borough. Three bakehouses have been re-modelled to modern standards.

**Ice-Cream.** The manufacture and sale of ice-cream again increased during the year. There are ten manufacturers and twenty-one vendors operating within the Borough. During the year the Public Health Laboratory Service inaugurated a scheme for the

fortnightly testing of samples of ice-cream for purity. Four provisional grades were fixed, and the product of an ice-cream manufacturer is considered to be satisfactory if the results of tests of a series of samples fall within the under-mentioned limits:—

50%	Grade 1.
80%	Grades 1 and 2.
20%	Grade 3.
0%	Grade 4.

Ninety-two samples of ice-cream obtained from vendors within the Borough were submitted for examination. The results are as follows :—

Grade 1	...	...	33	or	35.8%	} 58.6%
Grade 2	...	...	21	or	22.8%	
Grade 3	...	...	15	or	16.3%	
Grade 4	...	...	23	or	25.0%	

Although the number of samples falling within Grade 4 appears to be very unsatisfactory it must be borne in mind that the tests as carried out at the moment do not constitute a legal standard, and modifications in the technique of testing may have to be made.

**Food Premises.** Two hundred and seventy-one visits were made to food premises for the purpose of the examination of foodstuffs. This resulted in the condemnation of the following commodities:—

### CANNED FOOD.

Fruit	...	...	...	...	2,381	tins
Condensed Milk	...	...	...	...	972	"
Fish	...	...	...	...	757	"
Peas and beans	...	...	...	...	364	"
Corned Beef	...	...	...	...	370	"
Vegetables	...	...	...	...	186	"
Jam	...	...	...	...	135	"
Stewed steak	...	...	...	...	95	"
Meat and vegetables	...	...	...	...	46	"
Soup	...	...	...	...	117	"
Macaroni cheese	...	...	...	...	7	"
Sheep and Ox tongues	...	...	...	...	10	"
Fish paste	...	...	...	...	130	"
Sausages	...	...	...	...	71	"
Dried Milk	...	...	...	...	7	"
Fruit Juice	...	...	...	...	2	"
Boned Chicken	...	...	...	...	10	"
Bacon	...	...	...	...	5	"
Steak and Kidney	...	...	...	...	5	"

## OTHER FOODS.

Dried Fruit	...	...	...	...	171 lbs.
Butter and Margarine	...	...	...	...	9 „
Plums and Cherries	...	...	...	...	1,350 „
Bottled Fruit	...	...	...	...	32 jars.
Fish (wet)	...	...	...	...	4,578 lbs.
Lobsters and Crayfish	...	...	...	...	129 „
Pickles	...	...	...	...	1,654 jars.
Haricot Beans	...	...	...	...	50 lbs.
Macaroni	...	...	...	...	40 „
Flour	...	...	...	...	18 „
Pikelets	...	...	...	...	119 (in number)
Sausages and Sausage Meat	...	...	...	...	30 lbs.
Bacon and Ham	...	...	...	...	66 „
Sugar	...	...	...	...	7 „
Pudding Mixtures	...	...	...	...	480 packets.
Sweets and Chocolate	...	...	...	...	26½ lbs.
Potted Meat Paste	...	...	...	...	17 jars.
Meat (Bone taint and bruising)	...	...	...	...	525 lbs.
Meat (other causes)	...	...	...	...	763 „
Synthetic Cream	...	...	...	...	4½ gallons.
Caviare	...	...	...	...	4 jars.
Tea	...	...	...	...	3 lbs.
Sauce	...	...	...	...	6 bottles
Vinegar	...	...	...	...	2 „
Game and Poultry	...	...	...	...	30 (in number)
Cheese	...	...	...	...	16 lbs.
Meat Pies	...	...	...	...	8

**Meat Inspection.** There are two slaughterhouses in use within the Borough, the Government Slaughterhouse and a bacon factory. The former supplies meat for Taunton Borough, Taunton Rural, Wellington Urban, Wellington Rural and Langport Rural Districts, and in addition carcasses are frequently exported to London and other centres.

The following animals were slaughtered during the year :—

Beasts	...	...	...	...	1,873
Cows	...	...	...	...	961
Sheep	...	...	...	...	15,171
Calves	...	...	...	...	1,719
Pigs	...	...	...	...	10,630
Total					30,354

For the purposes of inspection of the above, 732 visits were made to the slaughterhouses, which resulted in the condemnation of the following meat :—

## TUBERCULOSIS.

		<i>Total Carcases</i>	<i>Part Carcases</i>		<i>Weight</i>		
				<i>tons</i>	<i>cwts.</i>	<i>qrs.</i>	<i>lbs.</i>
Beasts	...	53	22	12	19	0	1
Calves	...	2	—		1	2	23
Pigs	...	30	950	8	15	2	26

## OFFALS.

	<i>No.</i>	<i>tons</i>	<i>cwts.</i>	<i>qrs.</i>	<i>lbs.</i>
Beasts (Heads, lungs, livers, hearts, udders, etc.)	1,385	7	2	2	13
Calves (Heads, plucks, etc.)	6			1	20
Pigs (Lungs, livers, stomachs, guts, etc.)	2,363	8	14	1	1
Total weight of tubercular meat condemned.		37	13	3	0

## OTHER DISEASES.

		<i>Total Carcases</i>	<i>Part Carcases</i>				
Beasts	...	16	31	4	2	1	11
Calves	...	9	2		3	2	24
Pigs	...	7	6		13	2	19
Sheep	...	67	23	1	7	1	18

## OFFALS.

				<i>No.</i>				
Beasts	...	...	...	1,100	6	0	1	0
Calves	...	...	...	21			4	16
Pigs	...	...	...	273		5	2	20
Sheep	...	...	...	2,010	1	18	3	16
Total weight of meat condemned for other diseases					14	13	0	12
Total weight of meat condemned	...				52	6	3	12



## FACTORIES ACT, 1937.

### 1.—INSPECTIONS for purposes of provisions as to health.

Premises	Number on Register	Number of		
		Inspections	Written Notices	Occupiers prosecuted
(1) Factories in which Sections 1, 2, 3, 4 and 6 are to be enforced by Local Authorities	18	30	9	—
(2) Factories not included in (i) to which Section 7 applies	2	2	—	—
(a) Subject to the Local Authorities (Transfer of Enforcement) Order 1938.				
(b) Others ... ..	104	81	3	—
(3) Other premises under the Act (excluding outworkers premises) ... ..	4	4	—	—
TOTAL ...	128	117	12	—

## 2.—Cases in which DEFECTS were found.

Particulars	Number of cases in which defects were found				Number of cases in which prosecutions were instituted
	Found	Remedied	Referred		
			To H.M. Inspector	By H.M. Inspector	
Want of cleanliness ... ..	6	5	—	6	—
Unreasonable temperature ... ..	1	1	—	1	—
Sanitary conveniences					
(a) Insufficient ... ..	6	6	—	—	—
(b) Unsuitable or defective ... ..	5	5	—	—	—
(c) Not separate for sexes ... ..	1	—	—	1	—
TOTAL ... ..	19	17	—	14	—

## OUTWORK (Sections 110 and 111)

Nature of Work	Section 110			Section 111		
	No. of out-workers in August list	No. of cases of default in sending lists to Council	No. of prosecutions for failure to supply lists	No. of instances of work in unwholesome premises	Notices served	Prosecutions
Making of wearing apparel	229	—	—	—	—	—

I am,

Your obedient servant,

P. J. GOUGH,

*Chief Sanitary Inspector.*







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